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MEMOIRS OF
JUDGE SAMUEL PRENTISS,
OF MONTPELIER, VTL.,
AND HIS WIFE,
LORETTA (BOUGHTON) PRENTISS.

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I am very respectfully,
your obedient, &c.
Sam^l. Prestip.

MEMOIRS OF
JUDGE SAMUEL PRENTISS,
OF MONTPELIER, VT.,
AND HIS WIFE,
LUCRETIA (HOUGHTON) PRENTISS.*

HON. SAMUEL⁵ PRENTISS, judge, son of Dr. Samuel and Lucretia (Holmes), b March 31, 1782, in the old house in Stonington, Ct. † Brought to Northfield, Mass., by his father in 1786, he spent the early years of his life there, and pursued a course of classical studies under the care of the Rev. Samuel C. Allen. There, at the age of 19, he began to read law with Solomon Vose, Esq., but afterwards went into the office of John W. Blake, Esq., at Brattleboro', Vt., where he continued his legal studies, and in 1802 was admitted to the bar. He went to Montpelier, Vt., in May, 1803, and commenced the practice of the law, and there he made his home for the rest of his life. He m. Lucretia, eldest daughter of Edward Houghton, Esq., at Northfield, Mass., Oct. 3, 1804. In 1822 he was appointed one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Vermont, but declined to accept the office. He was elected a representative of Montpelier in the State Legislature for the years 1824 and 1825. While a member of the Legislature, he originated and sustained the very important act for the reorganization of the judiciary system of the State. In 1825 he was appointed first associate judge of the Supreme Court, and continued in that office till 1829, when he was appointed chief-justice of the State. In 1830, while chief-justice, he was elected to the Senate of the United States for six years, and in 1836 was again elected for a like term of six years. In 1832 he received the degree of LL. D. from Dartmouth College. On the eighth day of April, 1842, he was nominated judge of the United States Court for the District of Vermont. The Senate, without the usual reference, forthwith, and by a unanimous vote, confirmed the nomination. This office he held till his death, on Jan. 15, 1857.

Judge Thompson, in his "History of Montpelier," in speaking of Judge Prentiss's early legal studies, says, "But few, perhaps, are aware how close and extensive had been his study of all the great masters of English literature, how careful the cultivation of his taste, and how much his proficiency in the formation of that style, which subsequently so peculiarly stamped all his mental efforts, whether of

* From the second edition of the Prentice-ss Family Genealogy, p. 385 (except the † note on pp. 8 to 14 omitted there for want of room).

† See the view of it in first edition.

writing or speaking, with unvarying strength and neatness of expression. We recollect once having met with a series of literary miscellany, written by him, probably when he was a law student, published first in a newspaper in numbers, and afterwards republished in pamphlet form, which were all alike marked by neatness of style and beauty of sentiment, and which, though only intended, doubtless, for mere off-hand sketches, would have favorably compared with our best magazine literature."

"In person Judge Prentiss was nearly six feet high, well formed, with an unusually expansive forehead, shapely features, and a clear and pleasant countenance, all made the more imposing and agreeable by the affable and courtly bearing of the old-school gentleman. In his domestic system he was a strict economist, but ever gave liberally for religious and benevolent objects."

At a meeting of the Vermont Historical Society, held in October, 1880, Hon. E. J. Phelps was invited to deliver an "address on the life and public services of the Hon. Samuel Prentiss." Mr. Phelps had known Judge Prentiss for many years. His father, Judge Phelps, and Judge Prentiss had been intimate friends. Both had been judges of the Supreme Court, and together they had represented Vermont in the Senate of the United States. We copy portions of Mr. Phelps's address as delivered before the Vermont Historical Society, Oct. 26, 1882, and printed by order of the Legislature of the State at their session for 1882:—

"The events of Judge Prentiss's life can be rapidly told. They are few and simple. He was born in Connecticut, in 1782, of a good old stock, who traced back their lineage to an excellent family in England. His great-grandfather fought for the king in the old French war, and his grandfather fought against the king, a colonel in the Revolutionary war.* He came to Vermont, which was the El Dorado of the best young blood of Connecticut in those times, and was admitted to the bar in 1802, before he was 21 years of age. He practised law in Montpelier until 1825, when he was made a judge of the Supreme Court. In 1829 he became chief-justice. In 1830 he was elected to the United States Senate, and again in 1836. In 1841 he was appointed judge of the United States District Court for Vermont, and held that office until he died in 1857, at the age of 75, leaving twelve children and a very moderate estate. That is the whole story. Thirty-two years' continuous public service; yet the events of his life are substantially comprised in these few words. But the best lives are not made up of events; they are made up of qualities and of attainments. And simple as are the incidents

* His father, Dr. Samuel Prentiss, of Northfield, Mass., was a surgeon who served with distinction in the Revolutionary war.

that are now to be gathered of that life, it was beyond question one of the best and purest of the many good lives Vermont has been blessed with.

“ I may briefly consider (for I can touch but briefly upon anything to-night) his life in these four successive epochs, as a lawyer at the Vermont bar, as a judge and chief-justice of the Supreme Court of his State, as a senator of the United States, and as a judge of the federal court of this district.

“ He practised law, I have said, for twenty-three years. The phrase is one very commonly employed, and has very different meanings. The small pettifogger practises law, to the infinite mischief of the community he lives in. And there is another class, to whom that term of reproach cannot properly be applied, but who content themselves with finding in the practice of the law a sort of genteel trade, out of which some sort of a livelihood is to be extracted without much labor; who never begin to have a conception of the nobility or the scope of a profession, that has been well declared to be ‘ as honorable as justice, and as ancient as the forms of law ’; who never study it as a science, or in any large way, but content themselves with such little miscellaneous acquirements as may answer the purposes of the small controversies of their locality. And therefore it is, that good men outside of the profession are sometimes puzzled to understand how it should be exposed to the sharp and bitter criticism often applied to it, and at the same time should be the subject of the lofty eulogy heard in the best quarters in regard to it. It is because there are lawyers and lawyers; lawyers small and great, useful and mischievous. There are those who belong to the trade, and there are those who belong to the profession.

“ Judge Prentiss’s life as a lawyer was of course before my time. My personal acquaintance with him began when he was in the Senate of the United States. What I know of his previous career I have gathered from those who did know him, who are older than I, from the records he has left behind him, and from what I infer, from my subsequent acquaintance, must have been his character and qualities, when he was a younger man.

“ In the first place, although a country lawyer in the then little village of Montpelier, and in the small, rural, isolated State of Vermont, he proceeded to acquaint himself, by the most careful and judicious and far-reaching study, with the whole range of the common law and all its kindred topics. He did not terminate his labors with those subjects that were likely to turn up for discussion in the Washington County Court. He acquainted himself, I repeat, with the whole range and fabric of the common law, from its earliest foundations

and from the dawnings of its first fundamental principles. He learned the law as the perfection of reason and the science of justice. And then he brought to bear upon the practice of it the elevation of character and purity of motive that were born to him, and which he displayed in every relation of life. He felt and acted upon the conviction that the lawyer as well as the judge is one of the ministers of justice; that he as well as the judge is a sworn officer of the court; that the administration of justice is his business, and not its perversion; and that he is charged with his share of its duty, its responsibility, and its repute. No mean cause, no disreputable client, no fraud to be vindicated, no wrong to be achieved, no right to be defeated, no assassin to be turned loose upon the community, ever engaged the services of Judge Prentiss. Though the legal reports of the State were far more meagre at that period than they are now, they are sufficient to indicate to those who care to resort to them, the manner of business he was engaged in. And the consequence was, that although at that day Vermont was full of able lawyers, and although the limited facilities for transportation were such as to confine the bar of the State principally to the business of their own counties, Judge Prentiss, more than any other man in Vermont, was called upon to go to various parts of the State; I might almost say to all parts of the State in which any considerable courts were then held, and always in important cases. Such a lawyer as he was contributes to the law and the justice of his country more than most people are aware of. He is helping all the time, not only the particular business in hand, — the interests with which he is charged, — but he is helping the court; he is helping to educate and maintain the court. Wise and able judges feel that sensibly. The argument that may fail of its application to-day is seed sown upon good ground. The effect of it comes afterward, and bears fruit in the general law of the land.

“Such was the course of Judge Prentiss at the bar. And it is not surprising that in the year 1822 a seat upon the bench of the Supreme Court was offered to him and pressed upon his acceptance. Probably at that time there were few men in the State of Vermont better qualified to fill it. He alone of all the bar, with a characteristic modesty that was throughout his life beyond any other exhibition of that quality I ever knew, declined it. He distrusted the ability that nobody else distrusted. But three years afterwards, when the office was again pressed upon him, with no little reluctance he took his seat upon the bench. It is very noticeable in the reports how considerable a time elapsed before he could bring himself to be the organ of the court in pronouncing its opinions. He cast that duty upon his

senior brethren. His associates upon the bench were Chief-Justice Skinner, Titus Hutchinson, and Bates Turner, and afterwards Charles K. Williams and Stephen Royce, names among the most honorable in our judicial history. But in due time he began to write and deliver opinions, and some of them remain, fortunately for his reputation. Only a part of them, because, as I have said, the reports were more meagre then than now. They speak for themselves. It is true, they deal largely with questions that have been now so long settled that we have little occasion to go back to read upon the subjects. But the lawyer who is desirous of seeing what manner of man he was, and what sort of a court he belonged to, and who will take the trouble to peruse these opinions, will discover that they are distinguished, in the first place, by the most complete knowledge of the science of the law. And he will find, in the next place, that their conclusions are arrived at by logical deductions from fundamental principles, in a manner that to every capacity becomes perfectly luminous and decisive. And finally, that in every instance, the case the court is concerned with had been the subject of the most careful, thoughtful consideration, until nothing that bore upon the conclusion was overlooked, forgotten, or misunderstood.

“Some people are coming to think in these days that a judge can be manufactured out of almost any sort of material. And it is true enough that almost any man can sit upon the bench, can hear causes, and after some fashion can decide them; and the world will go along; there will be no earthquake; there will be no interruption of human affairs; he will fill the office. But by and by it will come to be discovered that the law of the land, which apparently has lost nothing of its learning, has wonderfully lost its justice; that conclusions that by learned reasons and abstruse processes have been reached are not consonant with justice, and establish rules that cannot be lived under. As the common people say, they may be law, but they are not right. There is philosophical and sufficient reason for this result: it is inevitable. Justice under the common law cannot be administered in the long run by an incapable man. And he is an incapable man for that purpose who is not a master of the principles of the law, by a knowledge systematic, comprehensive, and complete. Because those principles are the principles of justice. They are designed for justice. The law has no other reason, no other purpose. The judge who draws his conclusions from this source will keep within the limits of justice. The judge who is groping in the dark, and depending upon lanterns to find his way, who is swayed and swerved by the winds, the fancies, and the follies of the day, and by the fictitious or indiscriminating learning that finds its way into mul-

tiplied law books, will reach conclusions which laymen perhaps cannot answer, but which mankind cannot tolerate. Such courts lose public confidence, and business forsakes them. It is an invariable truth, that the more thorough the legal acquirements of the judge, the nearer his decisions approach to ultimate justice.

“ I believe I am correct in saying that none of the decisions in which Judge Prentiss participated have ever since been departed from. I think our Supreme Court has not found it necessary in the course of subsequent experience (and it is human experience that tries the soundness of legal conclusions) to overrule or materially to modify them.

“ In 1830, as I have remarked, Judge Prentiss was elected to the United States Senate; we may well imagine, upon no solicitation of his own; and went to Washington to take his seat. And there, as I have also remarked, I became personally acquainted with him.

“ And you will pardon me if I digress to say a word about that body, as it existed when I saw it for the first time. To comprehend what Prentiss was, it is necessary to comprehend what were his surroundings, and who were his associates. I venture to say that this world, so far as we have any account of it, has never seen assembled a legislative body, which, on the whole, and taking all things into account, could compare with the United States Senate at that period of our history. Not the Roman Senate, in its most august days; not the Parliament of England, when Burke and Pitt and Sheridan made its eloquence immortal; not that revered body of men who assembled together to create our Constitution. In the first place, it was made up by the selection of undoubtedly the very best men in every State in the Union, who could be furnished out of the political party which had the ascendancy in the State for the time being. The consequence was, that they were, almost without exception, men of the largest and most distinguished ability; and only the presence of the great leaders I shall refer to presently prevented almost any member of that body from assuming a position of acknowledged leadership. Though party conflicts at times ran high, their contentions were based, upon both sides, upon the Constitution, and upon the broadest and most statesmanlike views. Men might well differ, as they differed, about the right and wrong of the questions and issues of the day. Much was to be said upon both sides. But one thing was to be said on all sides; and that was that no man need be ashamed of being upon either side, because the groundwork of all was broad and statesmanlike and defensible.

“ There was, besides, a dignity, a courtesy, an elegance of deportment pervading the deliberations of that assembly that could not fail

to impress everybody who had the advantage of coming into [its] presence. No coarse personalities, no vulgarity of language or conduct, no small parliamentary trick or subterfuge was ever tolerated. And rarely have been brought together a body of men of such uniformly striking and distinguished personal presence.

“Time does not allow me even to name more than two or three of its members. I might cite almost the whole roll of the Senate in illustration of what I have said. Their names remain upon record as part of our history. It was once said that to have known a certain beautiful woman was a liberal education. I could say with far less exaggeration, that for an American citizen, and especially a young American citizen, to have known and seen the United States Senate of that day was a liberal education in what it most behooves an American citizen to know. He would have learned there, in such manner as never to forget, the difference between the gentleman and the charlatan, between the politician and the statesman, between the leader of men, who guides and saves his nation, and the demagogue who traffics in its misfortunes and fattens upon its plunder.

“Into that stately assembly walked, in 1830, one of the most modest, reticent, quiet gentlemen that ever lived; with no self-assertion, seeking no leadership, making few speeches, taking nothing at all upon himself, the representative of one of the smallest and most rural States of the Union, with no ambition to gratify, no purposes of his own to serve. But he came there, not to be inquired of by his distinguished associates, “Friend, how earnest thou in hither?” He came to take his place from the first, and to retain it to the last, as their acknowledged peer. No man in that Senate was more thoroughly respected and esteemed. No man was more listened to, when on comparatively rare occasions he thought proper to address them. No man’s opinion had more weight; no man’s intimacy was more courted by the great men I have alluded to, than that of Samuel Prentiss. His position there, and his standing in the Senate, were such that he not only represented, but honored his State. It was a remarkable exhibition of the influence of high character, and of quiet intellectual force. He came to be regarded by many as the best jurist in the Senate, yet no jurist said so little on the subject. Although Judge Story was then sitting, in the height of his fame, on the bench of the Supreme Court, Chancellor Kent declared that he regarded Judge Prentiss as the first jurist in New England. And what was a great deal better than that, he was a man of an independence of character that nothing could swerve. One might suppose from what I have said of his modesty and gentleness, his consideration for others and his distrust of himself, that he would be a man

who could be easily swayed and influenced. He was like the oak-tree, its branches bending in the breeze, the trunk solid and immovable. When the bankrupt law was passed in 1840, though it was strenuously urged by the Whig party, to which Judge Prentiss belonged, he opposed it. He stood out against the almost universal public demand; and he made a speech against it, which was said on all hands to be the ablest speech of the whole debate.* He could stand alone well enough when there was anything worth standing out about. The subsequent history of that bankrupt law demonstrated that Judge Prentiss was right. It was an ill-advised, hasty piece of legislation, which Congress was glad afterwards to abandon and repeal.

* I cannot dwell upon incidents of his senatorial career.† I cannot rehearse or repeat anything from his speeches. I must pass superfi-

* Walton says in a note to his *History of the Governor and Council*, which he prepared and printed by order of the Legislature, that an old citizen of Vermont, who has been honored by high offices, has religiously preserved a copy of that speech and reads it once annually.

† As a senator Judge Prentiss won an enviable and enduring reputation in a body embracing almost all the intellectual giants in that highest period of American statesmanship. Among the beneficent measures of which he was the originator and successful advocate, was the law, still in force, for the suppression of duelling in the District of Columbia. His speeches in support of that measure were unusually effective, and have taken rank among the best specimens of senatorial ratiocination and eloquence. — *Judge Thompson's History of Montpelier*, p. 280.

Judge Prentiss's course in the Senate was uniformly self-consistent, wise, and conciliatory. Holding to the views of the more moderate men at the North with regard to our Southern institutions, and once under the necessity of defending his own State and its resolutions from the aspersions of members from the South, he yet accomplished his duty in such a way as to win the esteem and confidence of his opponents, sustained the honor of his constituency, and preserved his own simplicity and integrity. Though compelled to enter into discussion upon the exciting topics of the day, and to advocate the power and the constitutional right of Congress to abolish the slave trade and slavery in the District of Columbia, and the right of petition, and the corresponding obligations to receive petitions from the people, and to resist, to the utmost of his strength, the projects for the annexation of Texas, he yet conducted himself in so courteous, dignified, and lofty a manner as invariably to conciliate the extremes from both sections of the country, to command the attention and respect and admiration of all who listened to his speeches, to vindicate the propriety and rectitude of his own course, and sustain his reputation for wisdom and sagacity.

While a member of the Senate he was appointed on several of the standing committees, such as the committee on the judiciary, the committee on public lands, and the committee on patents and the Patent Office.

As a member of the committee on public lands, he advocated the bill for the distribution of the proceeds arising from the sale of the public domain

cially over much that might be dwelt on. The flying hour admonishes me that I must hasten on. One single passage let me quote from memory — and I can repeat substantially his language — in a speech made in the United States Senate in 1842, when in his own quiet and modest way he expressed what was the guiding principle of his pub-

among the several States. He considered that the compacts of cession under the confederation guaranteed to the particular States their proportionate share in the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, and that the substitution of the present Constitution and government in the place of the confederation did not impair the right of the States to the fund. He regarded the provisions of the Constitution as confirming all the antecedent rights springing out of the compacts of cession, and argued that the public territory was a binding trust held by the government of the United States for the benefit of the particular States, “according to their respective proportions in the general charge and expenditure.” Hence he opposed the project for donating the public lands to the States in which they were located, and urged the distribution of their proceeds as the only measure that was just and harmonious with the Constitution. His speeches on this subject were marked by great clearness and force of argument, and discovered a power of stating and elucidating difficult propositions that was not surpassed by any one in the Senate.

As a member of the committee on the judiciary, to whom the subject was referred, he reported a bill directing a new edition of the laws of the United States to be compiled and printed, and accompanied the bill with a written report explaining at length its provisions, objects, and advantages. The bill was passed by the Senate, but no action was had upon it in the House. The utility of such a compilation of the laws has since become so apparent, that the executive, if our recollection does not fail us, has recently thought fit to call the attention of Congress to it.

In the session of 1834 and 1835, as well as in that of 1833 and 1834, he was one of the select committee, of which Mr. Webster was chairman, to whom was referred the bill for the satisfaction of claims due American citizens for spoliations committed on their commerce prior to Sept 30, 1800. The bill was reported upon favorably by the committee, and, after long debate, was passed by the Senate. Mr. Prentiss advocated the bill in a speech, presenting, in a plain and condensed view, the whole merits of the matter, and demonstrating very fully and clearly the equity and justice of the claims, and the obligation of the government to pay them. He argued, that the claims of the United States for indemnity from France for spoliations on our commerce were just, were so admitted by France, and were surrendered to that government as an equivalent for the correspondent release of the United States from certain important *national* obligations; and that, therefore, the government of the United States, having appropriated an indemnity due on account of spoliations committed on private property, as an offset to claims on the part of France, growing out of national obligations imposed upon the United States by treaties, was bound, according to the fundamental law of the land as well as by the principles of national justice, to make compensation to the injured individuals. Such was the substance of his argument, and on such a basis he advocated the measure as necessary to preserve inviolate the national honor and rectitude.

lic and political life. 'I would not be understood,' he says, 'as undervaluing popularity because I disclaim it as a rule of conduct. I am quite too humble and unpretending an individual to count greatly upon it, or to seek for or desire any which does not arise from the pursuit of right ends by right means. Whatever popularity that may

The nice sense of justice and honor which characterize Mr. Prentiss was exhibited on another subject, somewhat similar in its nature. Seeing how much of the time of Congress was occupied in legislating upon private claims, the great delays and expense to which the claimants were subjected, and the injustice often done them, and in many instances, the government, by such legislation, Mr. Prentiss, in January, 1837, in order to correct the evil, obtained leave to bring in a bill to establish a Board of Commissioners to hear and examine claims against the United States. This bill he introduced to the Senate at every subsequent session, so long as he remained in that body. It was passed by the Senate at three different sessions; but at neither was there any final action had upon it in the House of Representatives.*

Mr. Prentiss is the author of the existing Act of Congress against duelling in the District of Columbia. He drew up, introduced, and carried the bill through the Senate. The time chosen for its introduction, and the manner in which it was urged upon the attention of the Senate and of the country, were both equally appropriate and forcible. It was soon after the duel between Hon. William J. Graves, of Kentucky, and Hon. Jonathan Cilley, of New Hampshire, both members of the House of Representatives. No one who heard Mr. Prentiss on this occasion but had their respect raised to admiration for his strength of principle, perfection of argument, and calm but finished and subduing eloquence. On this bill he made three speeches: the first, upon introducing it; the second, in reply to objections; and the third, on the general merits of the bill. When we consider the event which was the immediate occasion of the bill, and the emotions which it caused throughout the circles at Washington and through the entire country, we may estimate to some extent the effect which was produced when Mr. Prentiss, evidently influenced by no mere impulse of overwrought sensibility, but by permanent and enduring principles that were only called into action by the occasion, rose in his place and proposed a bill designed to suppress duelling by attaching to it an infamous penalty; and concluded his remarks, by calling upon "senators, grave and considerate senators, heads of families, fathers of the land, to interpose their authority and influence to stay a practice unsuited to an enlightened age, and revolting to the moral and religious feelings of the country; and invoked them, by their regard for those on whom the hopes of the country rest, by their regard to eternal and immutable principles of moral rectitude, by every consideration of justice and humanity, by the duty they owed to God and their country, to give aid and support to a measure, demanded by the moral sense of the nation, essential to personal security, and to the preservation of law, liberty, and social order."

It was, however, in the speech on the general merits of the bill that he evinced most fully both his intellectual power and the purity and elevation of

* The same object has since been accomplished by the passage of a bill by Congress establishing the present Court of Claims.

bring will be grateful to me as to any one. But I neither covet nor am ambitious of any other.' He expressed in that modest way the same thought Lord Mansfield expressed when he said, 'I am not insensible to popularity; but I desire the popularity that follows, not that which is run after.'

his principles His peroration was remarkably impressive and effective both in its style and idea; nor need we ever despair of the safety and glory of our Republic and its institutions, so long as such men shall stand in our public councils, and affirm that the high principles of justice must never yield to the factions demands, however clamorous or importunate, of party policy or political expediency. The conclusion of that speech we cannot forbear to give, confident that it needs no other apology for its insertion here than its intrinsic truth and beauty, than the high moral lessons it conveys. And we can almost see his tall person animated, and his eye kindling under the vigor and almost prophetic nature of his own sentiments, and hear his voice, ordinarily feeble, become clear and sonorous under the influence of the lofty ideas he is uttering, as he concludes: "Sir, public men and the people everywhere must cease to undervalue the worth of moral excellence and virtue, and learn to consider that the want of these cannot be compensated by genius, however brilliant, by learning, however extensive, nor by any advantages, however fascinating and valuable in themselves, which either the bounty of nature, the power of industry, or the most accomplished education can bestow. In short, if we wish to maintain the free institutions of the country, if we wish to preserve purity in the government, if we wish to continue and perpetuate civil and political liberty, if we wish to uphold the character and honor of the country and give it a name surpassing every other name among the nations of the earth, we must remember and constantly act upon the great truth taught by Infallible Wisdom, that *it is righteousness which exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach unto any people.* We must remember that it is an axiom founded in the soundest philosophy, and verified by all authentic history, that as vice and immorality in private life invariably destroy individual character and usefulness, whatever intellectual endowments may accompany them, so, if favored and tolerated in public life, and among public men, they will inevitably infect and corrupt the general mass of the community, induce criminal insubordination to the laws, undermine the conservative and sustaining principles of the social compact, and ultimately lead to national dishonor, degradation, and ruin."

Mr. Prentiss was one of the two senators belonging to his party who refused to sustain, and used all his influence against the passage of, the celebrated Bankrupt Act of 1840. In a speech delivered in the Senate, in a general argument against the merits of the bill, he showed profound acquaintance with the English system of common and statute law, and a comprehensive sagacity with respect to the results of the measure, should it be carried into operation. His speech on this occasion was said by Mr. Calhoun to have been the clearest and most unanswerable argument to which the latter had listened for many years on any debatable question. While confident that the provisions of the bill were unjust and likely to work mischief, "kindness to the few and cruelty to the many," he yet rested his objections to it princi-

“ In 1841, very near the conclusion of his second term in the Senate, he was appointed, by universal consent, and with unqualified approbation, judge of the United States Court for the District of Vermont, to succeed Judge Paine, who had deceased. He went upon the bench, and remained there the rest of his life.

pally upon its moral tendencies and influences. He considered it as aiming a direct blow at the indefeasible rights of property, which lie at the foundation of the social system, and tending to induce fraud and dishonesty in the community. In his view, it seemed to legalize the breaking of contracts, and to destroy individual and public credit. A short experience of the law disclosed his wisdom and the soundness of his arguments, and its failure to produce any beneficial results verified his prediction. It grew out of a false and one-sided philanthropy that overlooked moral distinctions and personal rights, and consequently had soon to be repealed.

Mr. Prentiss, having honored himself and his State for two successive terms of six years in the United States Senate, was nominated by the President to the office of judge of the District Court of the United States for Vermont. The nomination was sent to the Senate on the 8th of April, 1842; and on the same day, immediately on its being received, the Senate went into executive session, and, without the usual reference of the subject to a committee, confirmed the nomination by a resolution declaring that they “*unanimously*” advised and consented to the appointment. This circumstance attending his appointment was gratifying as it was unusual, and showed the impression that the character and abilities of Mr. Prentiss had made upon his associates. His resignation was communicated to the Senate three days subsequently to the nomination and appointment. The sentiments which were freely expressed on the floor of that body when his letter of resignation was read, are those with which he has equally inspired all who have known him. It is said that senators of all parties vied with each other in expressing their opinions of his eminent fitness for the office, and their regrets that a man so pure and firm, of so much soundness of mind and views, of so much and such rare delicacy of conscientiousness, a man as necessary to the Senate as he would be useful on the bench, was to be removed from among them. The tone of the public journals on his retiring from the Senate was equally complimentary and just, and even party animosity never ventured to impugn the appointment.

The discipline to which Judge Prentiss subjected himself from the commencement of his practice at the bar, the character of his studies and the manner and object with which he pursued them, would all indicate that he would be able to discharge the public duties of his office to universal acceptance. And such has been the case; and such and so high is the reputation he has attained in the office he at present occupies, that he has been frequently and publicly mentioned as a competent person for a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States. In two instances, when there has been a vacancy on that bench, many of his friends have strongly urged him to consent that his name might be presented for the nomination; but in both instances he resisted the solicitation of his friends, and exerted his influence for another gentleman. He was advanced in years, and already worn with

“ In those days, Judge Nelson was the judge of the Supreme Court of the United States who was assigned to this circuit. And unlike the judges of our day, who are either too busy or too little inclined to travel about the country and hold circuit courts, it used to be Judge Nelson’s practice, and his pleasure, to come up into Vermont

toil in the public service, and desired to pass the rest of his life in repose and quiet. The honors and emoluments of such an office were not deemed an equivalent for its wearing and exhausting labors. The duties of his present office are not so onerous but that he can discharge them with great fidelity, and the performance of them furnished an agreeable and healthful excitement to his mind.

Judge Prentiss has always taken a warm interest in the judicial institutions of his adopted State. While at the bar, he was earnest and active in favor of every useful improvement in the judiciary system, which, as then existing, was essentially defective. And when a member of the Legislature, in 1824, he proposed and urged, in concurrence with the other members of the judiciary committee, the act which was then passed, providing for an entire reorganization of the courts. In 1825, in the same position, he succeeded in defeating an attempt made to repeal it. The new system went into operation, and has continued in existence, commanding almost universal approbation and support, down to the present day. And he is still watchful of every movement calculated to disturb or impair the judicial institutions and character of the State. He has opposed, at every step, the encroachments of those popular influences and measures, which, by submitting the election of judicial officers directly to the people, render less certain and uniform the administration of justice, strip the judiciary of its sanctity, and open it to the inroads of political excitement and party animosity.

The tendency of the duties and studies of a high judicial station is to purify and elevate and strengthen the moral sense, and to inspire respect and reverence for those immutable moral principles which are essential to the welfare of man and the peace of society. That tendency has been fully developed in Judge Prentiss. Purity of life in every relation is of prime importance in the character of a public man. Without it, genius, learning, wit, eloquence, and cultivation are worse than in vain. They add only to the length of the lever by which vice dissolves the fabric of individual character and social welfare. And we conceive it to be the highest eulogium we can bestow upon Mr. Prentiss to say that he is a pure man and a pure judge.

A republican, he dislikes ultra-democracy, and reveres the Constitution, and loves the union of States whose permanence it guarantees. A patriot and a statesman, he has no ambitious hopes for the nation, — no desires for its territorial extension and aggrandizement, — no dreams that it is the heaven-commissioned apostle of liberty and democracy to the other nations of the earth. He knows that “ patriotism is a necessary link in the golden chain of human affections and virtues,” and turns away with indignant scorn from that false philosophy or mistaken religion which would persuade him that cosmopolitanism is nobler than nationality, that philanthropy is greater than patriotism, and the human race a sublimer object of love than his own country and

once a year, at least, and sometimes oftener, and sit in the United States Court with Judge Prentiss. If there ever was a better court than that for the daily administration of human justice, year in and year out, in great matters and small, I do not know where it sat. The men were entirely unlike. No two judges so eminent could have been less alike than they were. Judge Nelson was not a great lawyer; he was a very good one. He had a large judicial experience, natural judicial qualities, great practical sagacity, a strong sense of justice, and the moral courage of a lion. He was probably one of the best presiding magistrates that has sat upon the bench of any *nisi prius* court in our day. Not, I repeat, because he was a great lawyer, but because he was a great magistrate. He had a sway over the proceedings of his court that controlled its results for good; there was a moral power and dignity about it that was salutary in its influence, not only on the business in hand, but upon everybody that came near it. It was felt by counsel, by juries, by witnesses, by parties. I used to think, as justice is depicted as bearing the scales and the sword, that Prentiss carried the scales, and Nelson the sword. Prentiss carried the scales, hung upon a diamond pivot, fit to weigh the tenth part of a hair; so conscientious he was, so patient, so thoughtful, so considerate, so complete in his knowledge of every principle and every detail of the law of the land. When he held up the scales, he not only weighed accurately, but everybody felt that he weighed accurately. But his very modesty, his distrust of himself, his fear lest he should go too far or too fast, deprived him to some extent of what might be called the courage of his judicial convictions. Nelson, when they sat together, always took care to assure himself from Judge Prentiss that he was right in his conclusions. They never differed. It would have been very difficult to have

his own people. The history of the past, which he reverences, not so much for what it is in itself as for the lessons that it teaches to the present, leads him to expect, that should our country ever become the propagandist of liberty among the nations, or seek to become the centre of light and freedom to all mankind, it would soon lose its independence and nationality.

Judge Prentiss is still living in Montpelier, Vt. His life is quiet, simple, unostentatious. He has the respect and confidence of the community, and is a member, with his wife, of the Congregational Church in that place. To the profession of Christianity he adds a hearty faith in its doctrines, and a cheering hope in its promises. That hope is more satisfying to his mind than any expectation of posthumous fame, — than any certainty that his name will be held in fragrant remembrance so long as the people of the State and land shall be taught to reverence "whatsoever things are true, and just, and honorable, and lovely, and of good report." — *From Sketches of Eminent Americans, Livingston's Law Register, 1852.*

brought Judge Nelson to a different conclusion from what he was aware Judge Prentiss had arrived at. But the sword of justice in Nelson's hand was 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.' And when a decision was reached, it was put in force without delay or further debate, and without recall. And so it was that the court became like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. It carried with it an inevitable respect and confidence. It was a terror to the evil-doer and the prompt protection of the just.*

“These desultory observations upon Judge Prentiss's life, in its various relations, may perhaps have indicated sufficiently what I desire to convey, in regard to the qualities of his character and his intellect; he was a man of rare and fine powers, of complete attainments in jurisprudence, a student and a thinker all the days of his life; conservative in all his opinions, conscientious to the last degree, thoughtful of others, a gentleman in grain, because he was born so, a Christian in the largest sense of the term, whose whole life was spent in the careful discharge of his duty, without a thought of himself, his own aggrandizement, or his own reputation. I saw him for the last time I ever saw him, on the bench of his court, towards the close of his life, perhaps at the last term he ever held. He was as charming to look at as a beautiful woman, old as he was. His hair was snow-white, his eyes had a gentleness of expression that no painter can do justice to; his face carried on every line of it the impress of thought, of study, of culture, of complete and consummate attainment. His cheek had the color of youth. His figure was as erect and almost as slender as that of a young man. His old-fashioned attire—the snowy ruffle, the white cravat, the black velvet waistcoat, and the blue coat with brass buttons—was complete in its neatness and elegance. And the graciousness of his presence, so gentle, so courteous, so dignified, so kindly, was like a benediction to those who came into it. Happy is the man to whom old age brings only maturity and not decay. It brought to him not the premonitions of weakness, of disease and dissolution, but only ripeness,—ripeness for a higher and a better world. It shone upon him like the light of the October sun on the sheaves of the ripened harvest.

“Of his private and domestic life I forbear to speak. Historical societies have nothing to do with that. Some here are old enough to

* An intimate and life-long friend of Judge Prentiss writes of him under date of Sept. 1, 1883, as follows: “He was the most modest man I ever knew, a man of rarest excellences of character, in whom there was no guile. He was pure and simple as a child, yet, in the pursuit of what he believed to be right, strong as a giant, and in denunciation of wrong and oppression, ‘terrible as an army with banners.’”

remember the admirable woman, his wife. Some may still remember his home, in a day when, as I have said before, the times were different from what they are now. Steam had not put out the fire on the hearth. Ostentation had not paralyzed hospitality. The houses swarmed with healthy children. There were fewer books, but more study. There was less noise and more leisure. There was plainer living and better thinking. He had, as some knew, peculiarities — eccentricities they might be called — in his personal conduct. They were nothing, probably, but the outgrowth of a strong individuality, which consideration for others restrained from having any other vent. His ways were exact; they were set; they were peculiar. When he came down from his chamber in the morning, and his family and his guests were in the house, he spoke to no one. It was understood that no one should speak to him. He passed through them as if in a vacant room, to his particular chair. He took down the Bible, and read a chapter; and he rose up, and offered a prayer. And then he went to the breakfast-table. After that, there was no courtesy more benignant and kindly than his. And that was an unvarying practice; and every one who knew the ways of his household respected it. It was the flower of that old-time reverence which distinguished his whole life; when he came forth in the morning, *he spoke to God first.*

“It never seemed to me — I was too far away at the time of his funeral to be present — it never seemed to me that he was dead. It never seemed as if I should find his grave if I explored your cemetery. He seemed to illustrate how it was that in the old days it came to be believed that some men departed this life without dying. He looked to me like a man who was only waiting to hear the words, ‘Friend, come up higher’; like one who in due time would pass on before us, not through the valley of the shadow of death, appointed to all the living, but walking away from us, upward and onward, until, like the prophet of old, he walked with God and disappeared from our sight among the stars.”

At the October session of the District Court of the United States for the District of Vermont for 1857, the death of Judge Prentiss was announced by Hon. Henry E. Stoughton, district attorney, whereupon the Hon. Solomon Foot, as chairman of a committee for that purpose appointed, reported the following resolutions, which, after remarks by his Honor Judge Smalley, and by Mr. Foot, were ordered to be placed on the records of the court:—

WHEREAS, The Hon. Samuel Prentiss, late judge of the District Court of the United States for the District of Vermont, having departed this life within the present year, and the members of this bar, and the officers of this



Mrs. Samuel Prentiss.

court, entertaining the highest veneration for his memory, the most profound respect for his great ability, learning, experience, and uprightness as a judge, and cherishing for his many public and private virtues the most lively and affectionate recollection, therefore,

Resolved, That his uniformly unostentatious and gentlemanly deportment, his assiduous discharge of his official duties, his high sense of justice, his unbending integrity, and the exalted dignity and purity of his public and private character, furnish the highest evidence of his intrinsic worth and of his great personal merit.

Resolved, That the district attorney, as chairman of this meeting of the bar, communicate to the family of the deceased a copy of these proceedings, with an assurance of the sincere condolence of the members of the bar, and of the officers of this court, on account of their great and irreparable bereavement.

Resolved, That, in behalf of the bar and the officers of this court, the honorable the presiding judge thereof be, and he is hereby, respectfully requested to order the foregoing preamble and resolutions to be entered on the minutes of the court.

Mr. Foot closed his remarks, after presenting and reading the resolutions, with the words, "And above all, and more than all, these moral and outward virtues were all tempered and beautified by the crowning graces of a Christian faith, of a Christian hope, and of a consistent Christian life. He knew and felt that

‘T is not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die,’

and hence for long years, his life had been but a continuous and living illustration of the great accordant precept of all natural and revealed religion, that while the fear of man is the consummation of folly, ‘the fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom.’ He died, as he had lived, calmly, peacefully, triumphantly.

‘Like a shadow thrown,
Softly and sweetly, from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him.’

“His pathway to the tomb was all radiant with celestial light. Fortunate and happy will it be for us all if we shall improve the instructive lesson which is taught us in the history of such a life,—in the history of such a death.”

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Mrs. LUCRETIA HOUGHTON PRENTISS, eldest daughter of Edward and Sarah Smith Houghton, of Northfield, Mass., was born on the sixth day of March, 1786. At an early age she developed the germs of those rare excellences of character, and of those sweet Christian graces, that in so eminent a degree beautified and adorned her whole life, and won for her the esteem and love of all who had the pleasure

of her acquaintance. Even at this day, one may find still prevailing in Northfield many traditions of her beauty of person and her manifold graces of character and conduct. On a recent visit to that charming country village, the writer was gratefully surprised to notice with what warm affection the memory of Mrs. Prentiss was universally held by the people, and with what earnestness they vied with each other in expressions of admiration of a character at once so beautiful and so lovely. Nearly every one had some pleasant story to tell of her early life. And one enthusiastic friend would not be satisfied until she had led us to the house, and into the very room, in which Mrs. Prentiss was married, and pointed out the particular spot on which she stood during the performance of the marriage ceremony.

On the 3d of October, 1804, at her father's house in Northfield, she married Samuel Prentiss, then a young lawyer of Montpelier, Vt., and with him left the home of which she was the idol, and became, for the rest of her life, a resident of Montpelier. Here she lived, honored and beloved by all, for more than fifty years. Here, during all those years, she discharged with remarkable wisdom, fidelity, and devotion the varied duties of a wife, mother, friend, and Christian.

Here she was blessed as the mother of twelve children, — eleven sons and one daughter, — two of whom, the daughter and one son, died in infancy; the others, ten in number, reached manhood, and all, save one, adopted, as their father before them had done, the profession of the law. "In consequence of the close occupation of the time of her husband in his crowding legal engagements when at home, and his frequent and long-continued absences from home in the discharge of his professional or official duties, almost the whole care and management of his young and numerous family devolved on her. And those who know what unceasing care and vigilance, and what blending of kindness, discretion, and firmness, are required to restrain and check, without loss of influence, and train up with the rightful moral guidance, a family of boys of active temperaments, of fertile intellects and ambitious dispositions, so that they all be brought safely into manhood, will appreciate the delicacy and magnitude of her trust, and be ready to award her the just meed of praise for discharging it, as she confessedly did, with such unusual faithfulness and with such unusual success."* Notwithstanding the ever-pressing and care-increasing demands of domestic duties, they were all promptly and well performed; nothing was forgotten, nothing slighted, omitted, or disregarded. Nor was she in the least unmindful of social duties. She neglected neither the poor, the sick, nor the church of which she

* Judge Thompson's "History of Montpelier," pp. 286, 287.

was an active and honored member, but was ever faithful in the performance of duty to each and all of them. Especially to the poor her heart was always open and her hand outstretched in loving ministrations. "No case of distress or misfortune which was known to her," said the Rev. Dr. William H. Lord, in a sermon preached at the funeral of Mrs. Prentiss, "escaped her unostentatious charity, and her beneficence would take no refusal. By the strangers who partook of the hospitality of her husband's mansion she will long be remembered for gentle courtesy, for the refined sweetness and unaffected grace and dignity of her appearance, and for the assiduous and earnest politeness with which she sought to anticipate every want and gratify every taste."

Early in her married life Mrs. Prentiss made a public profession of religion, and, with her husband, united with the Congregational Church at Montpelier. From that day to the hour of her death the beauty and gentleness of her pure religious life shone with a constancy of lustre that dazzled not, yet that attracted all observers and won the homage of all hearts. Its fragrance, like the sweet perfume of flowers, gently diffused itself upon all who came within the sphere of its influence. "Superior to the ordinary vanities of life," said Dr. Lord, in the sermon just quoted, "her chief adorning was not outward and worldly, but interior and heavenly, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Occupying a position which she might have made subservient to personal gratification and display, she preferred the quiet discharge of her ordinary duties, and exhibited, in all her relations, the most entire unselfishness and generosity, ever ready to deny herself for the convenience and comfort of others. Of remarkable sweetness and gentleness of disposition, she was never thoughtless of the feelings of others, nor rash nor unkind in her words or actions. Thoughtful and reflecting, nothing escaped her observation. She never forgot a favor. She never remembered an injury. The one never escaped her acknowledgment and gratitude; the other never stirred her spirit." So fully did she believe that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," that no instance is supposed to exist in which she gave expression to an uncharitable word or thought. Not many weeks after her death, the writer was told by Judge Prentiss that, in all his married life of more than fifty years, he had never known or heard of an instance in which she had spoken an unkind word or had lost the perfect control of her temper. She was, indeed, an angel of love and mercy, whose mission was to do good on earth, and, by a life of humble and blameless faith and piety, lead others to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

When her children had attained an age that placed them beyond

the necessity of a mother's care, leaving them in the custody of others, she accompanied her husband, so long as he remained in the Senate, in his annual journeys to the city of Washington, where she remained with him during the sessions of Congress. Although she found many sources of enjoyment in the society and climate of Washington, it was, nevertheless, in her own quiet home in the beautiful village of Montpelier, in the midst of her own family, and surrounded by kind friends, that she found those pure delights and that sweet communion and sympathy that she so much desired. Here she found sources of enjoyment that existed nowhere else. It was here she loved to live, and here she wished to die. Here, in her own household, she was a light to the feet, and a lamp to the path, of all. Here she was the idol of all hearts. The early, frank, and cordial recognition by her husband of her rare combination of pure and elevated Christian character with mental ability of a high order, undoubtedly contributed in a great degree to establish in his mind that remarkable supremacy of her influence that was apparent to all their intimate friends, and prepared the way for the exercise by her of that marvellous moral power with which she so modestly, yet so effectively, supported and sustained him in all the walks of his public and private life. In this connection, and as tending to show, in some degree, at least, in what estimation this noble and self-sacrificing woman was held by her husband and children, I append, with permission, the following extract from a letter written not many months after the death of Mrs. Prentiss, by one of her sons to his father, and by him carefully preserved: —

“Your professional career, and your official character and position, have been, and are, such that you and yours may well be proud of them. You have rendered the State and the country distinguished service for a long series of years; and the ability, uprightness, patriotism, and devotion to the Constitution and the Union which have characterized the discharge of all your public duties, have challenged the admiration of the considerate men of all parties. With this knowledge, and a consciousness that ‘all the ends thou’st aimed at have been thy country’s, thy God’s, and truth’s,’ a review of your labors and services must prove to you, in your declining years, a source of high satisfaction and enjoyment. To the guardian angel who, from youth’s bright days to venerable years, walked hand in hand with you, sharing all your joys and sorrows, encouraging by her wise and hopeful counsel, her persuasive gentleness, and sweet, approving smile, your onward and upward career, your character, position, reputation and fame — the results of your united labors and efforts — proved a source of just yet modest pride, and furnished an ever-recurring

occasion to her meek and gentle spirit for thankfulness to Him from whom all blessings flow. In them your children, too, who have so often listened with delight as she told, in her own simple and unpretending way, the story of your struggles and your triumphs, find abundant occasion for heartfelt pride and gratitude. Oh, how devoted as a wife, how dear and faithful as a mother! How wise, how mild, how gentle, how indulgent: yet how complete her supremacy! It was so in life; it was even so in death. Her sweet and gentle nature shrank not merely from turmoil and strife, but even from public observation. But when called to struggle with the King of Terrors, she displayed a Christian faith and heroism which not only sustained and supported her in the otherwise unequal contest, but secured to her a Christian's triumph and a Christian's reward. Nobly, yet meekly, she fulfilled her mission on earth! At peace with all, her pure and gentle spirit took its flight, and on angel wings soared to the bright and glorious mansions of the redeemed."

Mrs. Prentiss bore all her labors and honors alike with meekness and humility. She was never elated with prosperity, nor depressed if adversity confronted her. Patient and submissive, she never gave way to regrets or complaints at any of the allotments of life, but displayed, in her whole history, in a very remarkable degree, those passive graces of character which are the fruit both of true heroism and true Christianity. "She was a woman of the old times, and had in rare combination all those generous, exalted qualities of character that our imaginations are wont to attribute to the matrons of those by-gone and better days, in which the spirit of truth, sincerity, and simplicity, and the laws of courtesy and kindness, had not given place to the artificial tastes, superficial displays, and social rivalries" of a later period. To these and other personal characteristics, already mentioned, were added remarkable self-possession, decision, and firmness, and a harmonious blending of mental and moral powers, that gave grace, force, and dignity to a character conspicuous alike for gentleness and for untiring moral energy.

At all times and under all circumstances, whether of joy or sorrow, one unfailing Source of love and consolation was always open to her, and to which she never failed to apply with the loving faith and simplicity of a little child. So she lived, the light and morning star of her household, the joy of her husband and children, until the fifteenth day of June, 1855, when, surrounded by her husband and her nine surviving sons, at peace with all the world, with "malice towards none, with charity for all," and with a countenance radiant with faith in a Saviour's love, she sweetly fell asleep. A few hours before her death, and with a full consciousness that the end was very near, she

said to one of her sons that she had no more fear of death than she would have in anticipation of meeting her dearest earthly friend. Such, in brief, and feebly sketched, was the life, and such the death, of Mrs. Prentiss.

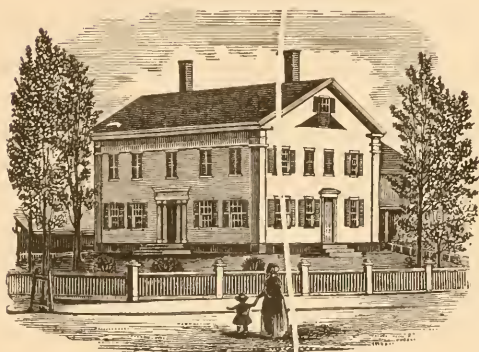
Judge Thompson, in his "History of Montpelier," speaking of Mrs. Prentiss, writes as follows: "It would be difficult to say too much in praise of this rare woman. She was one of earth's angels. In her domestic and social virtues; in the industry that caused her *to work willingly with her hands, in the law of kindness* that prompted her benevolence, and the *wisdom* that so judiciously and impartially dispensed it; together with all the other of those clustered excellences that went to constitute the character of the model woman of the *wise man*, — in all these Mrs. Prentiss had scarce a peer among us, scarce a superior anywhere. As already intimated, she had done everything for her family. And she lived to see her husband become known as he 'sat among the elders of the land,' and her nine surviving sons, all of established characters, and presenting an aggregate of capacity and good repute unequalled perhaps by that of any other family in the State, and all, all praising her in their lives. These were her works, but not all her works. The heart works of the good neighbor, of the good and lowly Christian, and the hand works that looked to the benefit and elevation of society at large, were by her all done, and all the better done for being performed so unobtrusively, so cheerfully, and so unselfishly."

In her own sphere, and measured by its possibilities and opportunities, she was unquestionably the peer of her husband. In all the elements of true womanhood; in all the qualities of a noble wife and mother; in all that constitutes a perfect Christian character; in all the graces that exalt and adorn that character; in the meekness and gentleness of the "blessed" who "shall inherit the earth," — she was, in the community in which she lived, confessedly not only without a superior, but with few, if any, equals. Wholly unmindful of self, she lived only to do good to others, and thus, with works of love and charity, to do her Master's will. Upon the occasion of her death a pall seemed to have fallen upon that community, and the people as mourners "went about the streets" sorrowing for the loss of a loved one who had gone, as she had lived, so quietly and so gently as to leave no ripple upon the surface of the placid waters.

"So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore."

“Oh, many a spirit walks the world unheeded,
That, when its vail of sadness is laid down,
Shall soar aloft with pinions unimpeded,
Wearing its glory like a starry crown.”

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JUDGE SAMUEL PRENTISS'S HOUSE, MONTPELIER, VT.

Mr. and Mrs. Prentiss lie buried side by side on a beautiful mound overlooking the valley of the Winooski River, in Green Mount Cemetery, just on the outskirts of the quiet village of Montpelier, "loveliest village of the plain." Over their graves stands a plain but beautiful and massive monument of granite, about twenty feet in height, on which are the following inscriptions:—

“SAMUEL PRENTISS,

BORN MARCH 31, 1782. DIED JANUARY 15, 1857.

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME
COURT OF THE STATE OF VERMONT,
SENATOR OF THE UNITED STATES,
JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF VERMONT.”

“LUCRETIA HOUGHTON,

WIFE OF

SAMUEL PRENTISS.

BORN MARCH 16, 1786. DIED JUNE 15, 1855.

A NOBLE WIFE AND MOTHER.”

JAN 16 1902

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